application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Accordingly, entry of the Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116.

Applicants appreciate the Office Action indication that claims 3 and 4 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 3 and 4 are now amended into independent form and thus are placed in condition for allowance.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2 and 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. §103 over Suga et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,811,364) in view of Matros et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,314,722). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action admits that Suga does not disclose a downstream catalyst that also functions as a particulate filter but asserts that Matros discloses a particulate filter. However, Applicants respectfully submit that there is no motivation to combine Suga and Matros.

While Matros discloses a particulate filter, there is nothing in Suga or Matros that discloses or suggests placing the catalytic converter upstream of the particulate filter as recited in claims 1 and 5. Thus, as agreed during the interview, there is no motivation provided in either Matros or Suga for combining the particulate filter of Matros with Suga.

For example, Matros teaches "a method for periodically reversing the flow of exhaust gases from a lean-burn engine". There is no teaching that such a periodically reversing the flow of exhaust gases as taught by Matros would even function in Suga. Additionally, Matros is directed to a lean-burn engine as opposed to an engine that performs lean, stoichiometric as well as rich burn that is contemplated in Suga. Thus, Suga and Matros individually or in combination would not have rendered the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 5.

Claims 2 and 7 depend from claim 1 and claims 6 and 8 depend from claim 5. Thus, Suga and Matros individually or in combination would not have rendered the subject matter in claims 1, 2 and 5-8. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully solicited.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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JAO:PXT/ale

Attachment:
Appendix

Date: December 18, 2002

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION
Please grant any extension necessary for entry;
Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461

APPENDIX

Changes to Claims:

The following is a marked-up version of the amended claims:

3. (Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine ~~according to claim 2~~, comprising:

a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, which carries a catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x, said catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x to purify NO_x by reduction when said air-fuel ratio is stochiometric or rich;

a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which carries said catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x; and

bypass means, wherein said catalytic apparatus carries said catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x, during the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means makes the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter.

4. (Amended) A device for purifying the exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine ~~according to claim 2~~, comprising:

a particulate filter arranged in the exhaust system, which carries a catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x, said catalyst absorbing NO_x when the air-fuel ratio in the surrounding atmosphere thereof is lean and releasing the absorbed NO_x to purify NO_x by reduction when said air-fuel ratio is stochiometric or rich;

a catalytic apparatus for purifying NO_x arranged in the exhaust system upstream of said particulate filter, which carries said catalyst for absorbing and reducing NO_x; and

bypass means, wherein said catalytic apparatus carries said catalyst for

absorbing and reducing NO_x, immediately after the finishing of the recovery process of the SO_x pollution of said catalytic apparatus, said bypassing means does not make the exhaust gas bypass said particulate filter and thus the exhaust gas passes through said particulate filter.